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PEACE, FREEDOM, AND PLENTY are the three major issues of the national political campaign as set forth by Norman Thomas in opening his contest for the Presidency on the Socialist Party's ticket. They are good issues, a hundred times more meaningful than the mumbo-jumbo of trite or equivocal phrases in the Republican and Democratic platforms. Mr. Thomas spoke of them as follows:

1. The issue of peace. Every party sings its praise. Only the Socialists understand that to be for peace is to be against imperialism, of which Coolidge's infamous war in Nicaragua like Wilson's infamous wars in Haiti and Santo Domingo are illustrations.

2. The issue of freedom. Both parties talk pious nonsense about injunctions. Neither party discusses civil liberty or what is the matter with our courts or the tragic failure of our country to give justice to the poor, especially if the poor are also workers, strikers, radicals, aliens, or Negroes.

3. The issue of plenty. It is part of our shame that we do not even know how many men and women in this country of stock-market prosperity know that most bitter and heart-breaking sort of toil: the hunt for a job. Probably there are at least 4,000,000, or one in every five or six of the workers. In what we call normal times one in every nine or ten is in the sorrowful army of the unemployed. Beyond advocating public works in dull times the old parties say nothing. We propose specific remedies, immediate remedies, among them: A proper record of the unemployed, a nation-wide system of public non-profit-making employment exchanges, a proper and carefully planned program of public works in dull times, unemployment insurance, and the five-day week.

We wish Mr. Thomas every success in his effort to persuade people that the man who most surely throws away his vote is the one who sacrifices principles in order to win some doubtful and temporary advantage by a ballot for one of two parties both of which live through exploiting him.

THIS IS THE SEASON of straw—straw hats, straws in lemonade, straws which show which way the wind blows, straw men, and straw votes. Straw votes do not amount to much. They are chaff. But so is politics, and straw votes are no more unsubstantial than the most of it. Already a straw vote on the Presidential election has been taken at the summer session of the University of California, in which Hoover beat Smith by eight votes, 386 to 378. We note, though, that the son of California was beaten by the students from his own State, receiving 248 votes to Smith's 265. To offset this the New York students repudiated their Governor, giving him 3 ballots and Hoover 5. New Jersey voted for Hoover 4 to 1; Massachusetts, 4 to 3; Ohio, 6 to 4; Indiana, 8 to 2; and the Solid South was disrupted to the extent that the entire Mississippi delegation, consisting of one student, and the total Florida block, numbering two persons, were unanimous for Hoover. On the other hand, Smith carried Illinois 7 to 4; Michigan, 5 to 2; Colorado, 4 to 2; Wyoming, 5 to 1. Five-sevenths of the entire student vote was from California. Exclusive of that, the ballots from the other States favored Hoover by 138 to 113. All voters were asked to set down also their preferences as between Coolidge and Davis in 1924. Coolidge had 508 supporters to 126 for Davis. Compared with this year's vote, this discloses a formidable shrinkage in Republicanism.

HERBERT HOOVER'S tortuous policy in regard to Mississippi flood relief has been publicly shown up by Colonel Robert Ewing, the publisher of the New Orleans *States*. There is no denying the truth of Colonel Ewing's charge, because too many men in Mississippi and Louisiana are familiar with the facts. Mr. Hoover repeatedly declared, both in public and in private, while he was in the flooded district, as Colonel Ewing states, that the Federal Government should assume the entire financial responsibility for relieving the wrecked States. When it was suggested that there be immediate action looking to the organization of public opinion to this end, Mr. Hoover privately asked all who came to him to do nothing, to leave it to him, and he would attend to it and put it through. Then he returned to Washington. Did he thereupon state to the press how he felt about the matter? He did not. Did he rush to the hearings before the Senate committee which was taking testimony as to the flood situation and ask to be heard? He did not. On the contrary, he dodged the committee, and left Washington for ten days. Finally, when Senator Willis insisted that he should come before it and publicly demanded him, Mr. Hoover appeared, a most taciturn and reluctant witness. He thought that the policy to be followed in preventing future floods should be determined by the Army engineers and ventured no opinion of his own. Then it was discovered

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that he had completely forgotten his promises and thought the financial responsibility should be shared by the States in the flood district. It is a most unhappy chapter in Mr. Hoover's political record, but unfortunately it is not a unique one.

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE stubbed his toe badly during his recent visit to New York City, in the course of which he made a violent attack upon Governor Smith. We are sorry to have to criticize so old and valued a friend, but Mr. White's utterances can only have shocked all who read them. He was, of course, well within his rights in digging up the Governor's early record in the New York Legislature. It is vulnerable. Al did take orders, like every other Tammany Assemblyman, and he voted against bills to improve moral conditions in New York City and to tighten control of the liquor traffic. That has been known of all men these many years, and Mr. White was quite justified in calling this record to public attention. But Mr. White's comments on this were nothing less than amazing. In one breath he disclosed that Smith was "compelled" by Tammany to do this and also that he acted "out of conviction." Next he said that it was unfair to judge the Smith of today by the Smith of twenty years ago, but that this record showed what he would do if elected President! He was quite different today; nevertheless, if elected, Tammany would compel him to repeat his early record! Then, when Walter Lippmann called upon him and explained that his attack had hurt Governor Smith, Mr. White withdrew his charges in so far as they related to prostitution and gambling, but stood pat on saloons. Saying that he would fight Smith on this line until the election, Mr. White announced that he had a "pocketful of money" and would stay in Europe until he spent it, which would probably keep him there until after the election!

IN THE FACE OF THIS, what Mr. White plainly needs is a rest cure in some Swiss resort, until he recovers his ordinary political judgment, not to say sanity. His position in regard to Charles Curtis, the Vice-Presidential candidate, is even more extraordinary. Some years ago he called Curtis a "nit-wit"; declared he "served the great interests" in the Senate; demanded his defeat for reelection by Kansas in order to punish him for his iniquity in voting in Congress with Aldrich, Lorimer, Cannon, Guggenheim, and Smoot. This was in 1912 when Curtis went with Taft instead of supporting Roosevelt. This year Mr. White appeared at the Kansas City convention demanding Curtis's nomination for President and lauding him to the skies. Charley, the ex-archtraitor, had suddenly become the ideal man to head this country, and Mr. White backed his fellow Kansan's candidacy by editorials praising him highly. Yet just before his sailing, when a reporter asked him if he still believed that Curtis was a "nit-wit," Mr. White said Yes, that he stood by this description of him! Mr. White being a sincere teetotaler, this mystery is beyond us. We pass it on to the psychoanalysts.

THE SENATE STANDS BETWEEN Roy O. West, counsel for the Insull power companies, and the place to which President Coolidge has named him, the head of the Department of the Interior. The Senate which twice flung back the name of Charles Beecher Warren of the sugar trust, when Coolidge appointed him Attorney General, will doubtless fling back the name of West with equal gusto. Roy O. West as Secretary of the Interior would be head of the Reclamation Service and the Geological Survey, ex-officio member of the Federal Power Commission, and director of the commission to investigate Boulder Dam. Such a guardian of our natural resources should come to the task from an experience of disinterested public service. West comes from thirty years of manipulation as attorney and adviser to Samuel Insull, whose tainted money kept Frank L. Smith out of the United States Senate and whose propaganda against Boulder Dam and public ownership have become a national scandal. Does President Coolidge remember what happened to certain of our natural resources during the Harding Administration when this same post of Secretary of the Interior was given to a gentleman from New Mexico? Friends of Coolidge absolved him from blame for the oil scandals because Harding was responsible for his own Cabinet appointees. When the record is finally completed, and the minor selections are included with the Cabinet leaders, we doubt if the appointees of President Coolidge will come nearer to distinction and probity in public service than the appointees of President Harding.

WHAT IS A RIOT? Evidently there are riots and riots. The jolliest riot that has come to our attention is that of the New Bedford strikers when 240 pickets were arrested on July 30. They were peacefully picketing in large numbers before the cotton mills where they used to work. Then—but let the New Bedford *Evening Standard* describe the riot:

> Toward mid-afternoon a big police truck drove around to the Kilburn [cotton mill], loaded in half a hundred willing pickets, and carried them to the central station.
>
> At 5 p. m. two more trucks rattled around to the Whitman, loaded up with men and women, fought off an eager crowd that begged the disgusted patrolmen to take them too, and jogged off to headquarters. A fourth truck, requisitioned for the occasion, took care of an after-line that formed by backing up to the mill gate so all the patrolmen had to do was to keep back the rush that ensued as the picketers clambered aboard.

When the "rioters" got to court, the atmosphere was not so jolly; they were sentenced to prison for rioting for terms ranging from two to six months. Fortunately the sentences do not mean much for the immediate future. In practically all cases a jury trial has been demanded, the strikers have been freed on bail, and the strike goes on. Some 28,000 strikers have fought for sixteen weeks against a 10 per cent wage cut, and still there are almost no strike-breakers in the mills.

JUDGE FRANK MILLIKEN of the Third District Court does not reflect credit upon Massachusetts justice by his handling the New Bedford strike cases. One of the simplest rights of a citizen under the law is the right to know what is a crime and what is not. No striker in New Bedford can tell whether he is committing a crime or not when he walks on the picket line. "Picketing in New Bedford must stop," shouted Judge Milliken on one occasion. "It is a nuisance." But the Massachusetts law allows picketing, although the statute is very vague and leaves the methods of peaceful persuasion entirely to the interpretation of local police officers. In some of the cases Judge Milliken has ruled that picketing in large numbers is "parading without a permit," in other cases he has

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called such picketing common-law rioting. His rulings are all the more remarkable because the strikers were not molested in forming large picket lines in the first three months of the strike. Perhaps the police were too lenient at the beginning of the strike in the face of the reckless defiance of left-wing leaders, but that cannot justify Judge Milliken in depriving the workers of recognized legal rights.

FOR HEROISM in the face of an overwhelming catastrophe commend to us Paul Wittgenstein. Drawn into the maelstrom of the World War, this rising young pianist lost an arm on the field of battle. A wave of sympathy swept over European musical circles—so gifted a youth and so suddenly deprived of the results of years of artistic labor! For him it was plainly a living death, this extinction of all his professional ambitions. But Paul Wittgenstein was not one to accept defeat even where his loss seemed irretrievable. He determined to go on with his music despite his deprivation of five fingers. In the first place, he found a number of compositions written for the left hand only. In the second, many composers, including Richard Strauss, on hearing of his plan wrote for him and dedicated their compositions to him. Friends and admirers rallied to him and leaders of orchestras engaged him to play with them, not because he was a freak, not because he posed as a war-hero, but because of his solid artistic achievements. So it is that nearly ten years after his catastrophe, Paul Wittgenstein will make his American debut with the new Beethoven Symphony Orchestra in New York next winter, playing a new Strauss concerto—"Panathenaenzug"—which will, we trust, sound better than its name. We believe that the American public will be proud to give to Mr. Wittgenstein the warm reception his fortitude and ability entitle him to receive.

The Southern Bishops

THE war of Southern bishops over the wetness of Governor Smith is more than a side-show or a fight between Dry and ultra-Dry Democrats. It is a serious challenge to that trinity of social attitudes which rules the South, loyalty to the Protestant church, allegiance to the Democratic Party, and "keeping the nigger in his place." These three things have gone together so consistently in Southern life that a "nigger lover," a Catholic, or a Republican has, in many sections, had no chance whatever of success.

Now come a number of ultra-respectable leaders of Southern Protestantism who say frankly that they are going to bolt the Democratic ticket and vote for Hoover. They take this unprecedented step in the name of their hatred for the liquor traffic. Whatever may be the justice of their cause, we rejoice that they are smashing the political prejudices which made the Solid South solid. One of those prejudices was given a painful blow when the Democrats nominated a Catholic. Now another is threatened when a large number of native Southerners announce their intention of voting for a Republican. There is hope that a new wind of reality will blow through Southern political life.

The main question concerning the challenge of the ultra-Dry bishops is still to be answered. Will they dare to permit the Negroes to vote with them for the Republican ticket? Clearly they need the Negro vote to win, and many of the Negroes would like to give that vote. If a fair and free election were taken in the South, the Negro vote might be the deciding factor. Our guess is that the ultra-Dry bishops will never open their mouths about the Negro vote. To doubt the justice of white supremacy as it is now practiced in the South is a greater sin in the eyes of most Southern people than anything mentioned in the Decalogue. If the Hoover Democrats should venture to suggest the possibility of Negro support for their cause, the resulting tidal wave of racial fear would undoubtedly swamp them.

Bishop Warren Candler of the Methodist Church South and the Coca Cola family does not mention the Negro vote in discussing this subject. He chides his brethren for using the church openly to fight against Governor Smith. "Do not preach politics," he says, in quoting an old episcopal letter. "You have no commission to preach politics. The divinity of the church is never more strikingly displayed than when it holds on its ever straightforward way in the midst of worldly commotions."

With the bishop's attitude toward Governor Smith we are not concerned here, but since when has the Methodist Church South held to a straightforward way in the midst of worldly commotions? In the Civil War the Southern Methodists stood for the South and slavery; in the World War they stood for Wilson and the Allies; in the present controversy in the South over the eleven-hour day and twelve-hour night in cotton mills at least one church conference has espoused the cause of the mill-owners.

Bishop Candler, who leads the regular Democratic section of the Methodist Church South against Bishop James Cannon and his pro-Hoover associates, is quite willing to mix in economic and political controversies when he is on the dominant, conservative side. He favored compulsory military training at Emory University when he was chancellor, and he kept Debs from speaking on the campus of that institution in 1920 by charging that students who petitioned for the right to hear Debs "had tried to take the escutcheon of honor of this institution into their hands and stain it in dishonor by having a jailbird enter our midst." When the leaders of the American (Southern) Cotton Manufacturers' Association met recently in Richmond they were treated to a splendid eulogy from Bishop Candler, who praised them for giving their workers every educational, social, and spiritual advantage. The fact was not mentioned that these manufacturers pay their workers the lowest wages and work them the longest hours of any large manufacturing industry in the United States.

As between Bishop Candler, who appears to be wholly consumed with Pentecostal yearning, and Bishop Cannon, who says he is out to demolish Al Smith, we prefer Bishop Cannon, though he ought not to be so shocked at the thought of Roman Catholics likewise seeking their ends through politics. Why shouldn't a bishop go into politics if a moral issue is involved? And where can a political situation be found in which there is not a moral issue of some sort? Almost every aspect of moral life is conditioned by political habits and institutions, and the preacher who is interested in the moral life of the community cannot stay out of politics. He may take the plunge into politics as a non-partisan, or he may indorse one party as against another. In either case he is to be judged, as any other citizen is judged, by his knowledge of facts and the reasoned truth of his utterance.

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Power Mergers and the Public

AN issue of far-reaching importance has been raised in New York City by the Public Committee on Power, a group of citizens who came together to support Governor Smith's policies on water-power and others of like import. The committee has sought through its attorney, Morris L. Ernst, to intervene in the proposed consolidation of the Brooklyn Edison Company and the Consolidated Gas Company of New York to the extent of asking the Public Service Commission, in whom is vested the authority to approve such a merger, to insist that some of the great savings to be made by the combination shall be passed on to the consumer, so that all the profit from the transaction shall not go to the stockholders. The chief officials of the two companies have said that the combination would lead to savings in management and operation, one declaring these economies to run between two and three millions of dollars and the other stating that they could not even be estimated; for this reason they have asked the commission to approve the amalgamation. But the commission has refused to let Mr. Ernst make an oral argument and has declined to the same extent to hear ex-Mayor Hylan representing the People's Civic League of Brooklyn, on the ground that neither of these organizations can show what is necessary, "a property interest or some duty or right devolving upon or belonging to the party to be brought in." It has, moreover, indicated that it may approve the merger at an early meeting without asking in return for the privilege of amalgamation one single concession to the consuming public, although the representative of the City of New York at the hearing asked for a five-cent rate in place of the existing one and objected to the terms of the combination. The commission persistently declares that it is not a merger which is being sought. For its attitude in denying additional hearings the chairman, William A. Prendergast, assumes full responsibility. "In drawing distinctions," he says, "between those who appear and claim the right to take part in a case, the commission has exercised what it believes to be its best judgment, and continued consideration of the question between the time of the first hearing and the second confirms the commission in its judgment."

Naturally this situation presented a political opportunity and Governor Smith was not slow to seize upon it. The Public Committee on Power includes within its membership at least one of his most trusted advisers, and as has been said, it was formed partly with a view to supporting him. He therefore telegraphed to the Public Service Commission asking that Mr. Ernst and other critics be given a prompt hearing. By a vote of two to two, dividing on strict party lines, the effort to throw open the hearings was lost. A fifth member of the commission, a Democrat, was ill at his home and unable to vote. There, at this writing, the situation stands.

The commission has stated to the antagonists of the merger that they are to be restricted merely to filing briefs in support of their contention. That this is satisfactory no one will suggest. Much as we regret having to differ with Mr. Prendergast, his position that such a body of public-spirited citizens shall not be heard at length in so momentous a case as this indicates to us that the commission has an entirely wrong idea of its functions and duties. The commission should not only be willing to listen to every argument presented by reputable citizens; it should certainly deem itself the public defender and should therefore inquire into the contention of the Committee on Power that if this merger proposal is accepted it will set the stamp of official approval upon a capitalization of both companies which the committee claims is at least 120 millions too high.

But the question that has been raised by Mr. Ernst's brilliant appeals to the commission and to the Governor is one that cannot be downed by any hasty action on the part of one public regulating body. Already Norman Thomas, speaking for the Socialist Party, has taken his stand, and has demanded that the merger, to which per se he is not opposed, shall lead, if granted, to a five-cent rate per kilowat hour instead of the nine cents now charged in the Borough of the Bronx, the eight cents demanded in Queens, and the seven cents exacted in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

All over the country mergers of electric and power companies are going on. New holding companies arise overnight. Many of them are showing enormous profits, yet their officers do nothing but cut the coupons and receive the dividend checks of the lesser companies which constitute the aggregation over which they preside. It is plain that if this tendency is not checked it will only be a few years before the whole of the public utilities of this country will be controlled by two or three enormous corporations with a capitalization running into the billions, whose operations will not be restricted to the United States alone, but, as in the case of one of the growing combinations, be concerned also with power companies situated outside of the United States. Now these combinations may be inevitable and may perhaps, as Norman Thomas thinks, often be demanded by technical and economic progress. Yet the fact remains that in all of these cases the public, and not merely the stockholders, should also profit by the new combinations. If the regulatory commissions are merely to approve every merger suggested by the managers of the merging companies, their function becomes that of the rubber stamp. If the managers of the public service corporations are to be allowed to believe that those whom they represent are to get all the advantages that arise from combinations, we shall see the latter taking place with even greater frequency.

The truth is that this constitutes another serious test of the regulatory principle. The corporation managers who at first were so bitterly opposed to the Interstate Commerce Commission and the several State commissions are now the foremost defenders of them. How can any one suggest public ownership, they ask, when the consumers have such perfect control of the companies through commissions? But this Brooklyn-New York case proves that the interests of the people are not being protected. If Governor Smith had not jumped in, the Democrats would have voted with the Republicans and the whole thing would have slipped through. If the public is to receive the benefit of amalgamations in large units, some different system will have to be devised. The fact that the City of New York is now moving to take over its street and subway transportation companies points the way.

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Navies and Peace

PERHAPS the most hopeful aspect of the agreement into which France and Great Britain have entered for the limitation of naval vessels lies in the character of the men who have reached the accord. Such arrangements usually involve technicalities which technicians alone can thresh out—conditions which may be twisted to suit almost any propaganda. But in an accord between two premiers as generally disposed toward international peace as Aristide Briand and Sir Austen Chamberlain there is fair assurance of a mutual effort to reduce the hazards of war, even though the details of the agreement are obscure and their reception by the rest of the world is still in doubt.

It is significant that although the agreement was first announced in London, most of the details have come from Paris. This apparent interest in the plan in France is a good sign, for recent efforts toward the limitation of armaments have been resisted by the French. The effect of the agreement will not be clear until it comes up as a basis for discussion at the next session at Geneva of the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament of the League of Nations. If it proves then to be merely a prearrangement whereby France and England can dominate the meeting in their own interests, nothing will be gained. If, on the other hand, it turns out to be a practical basis for further international limitation of navies, it will be a genuine contribution toward peace.

As first announced in London the agreement was not set forth as a limitation upon naval armament but as an agreement to make all building programs public some time in advance. This would prevent secret preparations and thus militate against some naval construction, but it would not limit specifically the competitive armament race. As set forth in Paris the arrangement goes further and is said to limit war vessels according to classification in four categories: (1) All fighting ships of more than 10,000 tons; (2) airplane carriers of more than 10,000 tons; (3) surface ships of less than 10,000 tons carrying guns of six to eight inches; (4) submarines of more than 600 tons. Limitation of the last two categories is of the most importance because such vessels were not touched in the restrictions imposed by the Washington Conference.

If preliminary reports are correct, France and Great Britain have compromised on an essential point in naval strategy. Heretofore, France has stood out for a limitation based upon the total tonnage of a nation's navy, whereas England has wanted to divide its fleet into numerous classifications, treating each individually in the matter of restriction. The present agreement seems to be a mean between the two points of view.

Peace, of course, means more than disarmament. To achieve it we must get rid of the *causes* of war as well as the means. For the means of war can be purchased or produced upon comparatively short notice. But experience has proved that the means of war are among its causes and that unpreparedness is usually an aid toward peaceful and reasonable diplomacy. We may add that nothing leads the mind of a nation so successfully toward a policy of peace as a progressive limitation and reduction of its war-making machinery.

The "Friendly" Olympics

MANY Americans picture the Olympic Games as a great festival of innocent play for happy, young athletes, a training-ground for clean sportsmanship, and a promoter of international good-will. In the background of this conventional picture there is usually a vision of the Star Spangled Banner waving serenely over the admiring (and defeated) nations of the earth.

How fatuous that picture is can be seen by reading the current news dispatches from Amsterdam. The Olympic athletes upon examination look more like quarreling semi-professionals than happy amateurs. They are disciplined like trained seals and guarded like murderers in a death-house. They enter the games with the sport-loving abandon of a Georgia road gang on an August afternoon. The whole proceeding is characterized by a hair-trigger sensitivity to any possible foreign insult.

On the opening day of the present Olympic Games the French declined to march in the parade because a Dutch gatekeeper had refused to allow them practice-time in the stadium. Our American contingent had been heartily booed by the French in 1924, and this time the Amsterdam audience was decidedly cool. In the wrestling contest shouts of delight greeted any athlete who could score a point against an American, and, according to the American coach, our wrestlers were defeated by illegal methods. Perhaps the crowd remembered the confession of Charles Paddock that four Americans had agreed to "jump the gun" on an English sprinter in the last Olympics—although the plan was never carried out. Perhaps—but let a paragraph of Wythe Williams in the New York *Times* tell part of the story. The scene is the passage of the athletes' parade before the Prince Consort of Holland on the opening day of the Olympic games.

> All flags except one were dipped when the various delegations passed the royal stand. The Stars and Stripes carried by Clarence Houser, true to the tradition that the national emblem shall never be lowered to man or nation, was borne aloft. As has been the case at past Olympics, this caused some criticism, on the ground that at a purely sporting event the Americans might follow the same procedure as the other nations. Also, instead of saluting when passing the reviewing stand, the Americans, headed by Major General MacArthur, merely gave right dress.
>
> Although the crowd was loyal in applause to all visiting teams, there was considerable comment after the ceremony to the effect that, apart from the vociferous applause from compatriots in the stands, the general reception of the American team was somewhat lukewarm.

What a love feast! We laughed at the French when they pouted so conspicuously over the bad manners of a Dutch gatekeeper, but our own provincial etiquette of flag-waving will be remembered long after the gatekeeper's row has been forgotten. Is there not some military Emily Post at Washington who can quietly change the rules about flag-dipping—without mentioning the fact to the American Legion?

Amateurism at the Olympic Games has become a farce and international friendship a stiff formality. No lover of true sportsmanship could grieve very deeply if the games were suspended a while until we human beings learn to play together in a civilized manner.

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It Seems to Heywood Broun

IF I had a fortune I should build a house. It would not stand upon a hill or by a river's brim. This house of which I dream is situated very near the center of the city. Indeed some betterment association of the town might well endow me, since the plan calls for the purchase of a brownstone front and its immediate demolition. Once the walls were down there could be speculation about a substitute. It would be my own desire to have something in light green or purple. There will be no other house in all the world like my house. It should be so.

Uniformity of architecture is among the most destructive forces in city and suburban life. Somebody should keep statistics upon the careers of a group of persons living in one of those regimented blocks of little houses. Brick for brick the family resemblance holds them fast. They might be, these houses, so many still-born kittens in the litter of an unimaginative cat.

It is my assumption that no one very useful will ever grow up from out of these surroundings. The emergence of the great from shack and hovel probably has truth as well as tradition behind it, but there the controlling factor is something quite different. Abject poverty can give a boy a house more mean and ramshackle than any round about and then, at least, he does escape the blight of sameness. Lincoln had more chance in a log cabin than he would have possessed if his formative years had been passed in one unit of a row of villas. It would be better by far to be cradled in a sampan than to grow up with a Long Island home development. Even the tenements of New York are less depressing than many apartment houses, for they run less to strict conformity in architecture.

Yes, I think I shall build. Most of us are too casual about second-hand houses. The floor plan and the condition of the furnace would not be enough for me. I should like to know something about the history of any building where I was prepared to light. I'd like to know who lived there and for how long and whether they were happy. People adopt a baby and make careful inquiry about heredity influences. In this I take small interest. Babies can be remodeled from the ground up. But it surprises me to find these same people who haggle over a baby's past walking boldly into a residence without knowing a single item of its inheritance. A purchaser might fight shy of a house if more than a few murders had been committed on the premises and there is still some prejudice against haunted dwellings. Of course no person with any pretense to rationality actually believes that any house is haunted. It simply happens that he doesn't like the approach or maybe it is just the plumbing.

I have never seen any ghostly figure or heard the clanking of the chains and yet I am more or less addicted to the belief that emanations do subtly persist in houses. I would rather live in a humble cottage where there had been a nice clean murder, an agreeably rapid and impulsive murder, than take up my abode within walls where one or two had haggled over a span of years. One summer for a brief time I rented a cottage in the country and made no inquiries as to its antecedents. The view was fine and out of the well came excellent water, but every one who stayed in that house for even a day was more than characteristically surly. And if any guest accepted an invitation for a week-end he went away no more than coldly cordial, while I knew in my heart that I hated him.

During a hot spell of ten days I lost a dozen friends in this fashion. Of course there always seemed a good and apparent reason. There would be quarrels about dice or cards or the principle of prohibition. As I remember, another man and I came almost to blows about the right of secession and whether the South had a constitutional leg upon which to stand in the Civil War. It seemed to me curious that so great a passion could be engendered from an academic matter. Again there was great bitterness between two of the guests because one undertook to tell the other that there was no such word as "arbitrator" and that the proper term was "arbiter." That was the time when I was compelled to step between the disputants saying, "Ladies, ladies, do you want to get your pictures in the *Graphic?*"

Throughout that summer the premises rang with expressions such as "Shut your yap," "Is that so?", and "When you say that, smile." So curious was the constant bickering that I sought an explanation. I am myself a person of infinite good nature and exquisite manners.

It seemed to me extraordinary that I should ever have been led, even under provocation, to call a girl a blockhead simply because she failed to bid the slam which she so obviously held. It was only a matter of a few thousand points and amounted to very little in money. Under ordinary circumstances I should have expected to find myself passing the whole matter off with a cheery "It really doesn't matter. I honestly don't think you're the worst bridge partner I've ever had. I know several who play much more stupidly."

But in this haunted house no flash of tact ever came to the lips of anyone. Hatred, bitterness, and sarcastic comments seemed almost to cling under the rafters. I found that a farmer and his wife had quarreled in that house for almost thirty years. She finally moved out to a barn across the road. During the last year of the marriage (they both died of a January) neither one spoke to the other. But often she came to the door of the barn and glared across the road at him. It was a narrow road. I am not prepared to defend in any logical or scientific way my belief that this long-protracted venom had impaired that house just as much as if a beam had sagged. All I know is that I had not a civil word for man or woman during an entire summer. And that is enough to convince me that there must have been something malignly miraculous about the cottage.

For fear of being laughed at I will not mention the fact that it was only in the rear of the house that flowers grew. The soil in front seemed much the same and there was even more sun. Big husky rose bushes were all about the front door, but never so much as a bud. Incidentally, I might remark that this was the doorway in which the farmer stood to send back glare for glare to his wife across the road. Still, the apple tree a few yards away bore prodigiously. They were not regular apples but those small, bright red sour ones. I do not know the name they go by, but I believe that they are used for making jelly.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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The Poincaré Legend

By ROBERT DELL

Paris, July 8

RAYMOND POINCARÉ should be a proud and happy man. For sixteen years he has been the master of France; his authority underwent a brief eclipse only to issue from it more potent than ever, and for the last two years it has been undisputed. He has been supported by the French people at a general election in which he was the only issue, he has been given a vote of confidence by all parties in the Chamber except the Socialists and Communists, and he has crowned the financial reconstruction of the last two years by giving France a new currency firmly established on a gold basis.

Yet he seems depressed and almost humiliated. The speech in which he announced the legal stabilization of the franc left on its hearers an impression of melancholy. Since stabilization was decided on he has shown more than once a nervousness not at all habitual and, according to some of his colleagues in the Cabinet, he seriously contemplated resignation, at any rate for a moment, immediately after the passing of the stabilization law. And in his last important speech in the Chamber he was no longer the cold, almost inhuman Poincaré with the blunt authoritative manner, to whom we are accustomed, but a softened and persuasive Poincaré who seemed to feel the need of apologizing for himself.

He had reason to be melancholy, for his apparent triumph was in fact a defeat. He has mastered his fellow-countrymen, but economic realities have mastered him. The world imagines that the restoration of a stable currency—the de facto stabilization eighteen months ago and its recent legal consecration—has been the work of Poincaré. Poincaré himself knows better. When he reluctantly and after a strenuous but vain resistance asked the French Parliament to pass the law that made final the repudiation of four-fifths of the French national debt and the imposition on rentiers of a capital levy of 80 per cent, he registered the failure of his ambition to be the "savior of the franc." His view was that of the French rentier class, of which he is so typical a representative, that the stabilization of the franc at any rate below the pre-war value would be an act of national bankruptcy by which France would be eternally dishonored. That he, the highly respectable bourgeois, should have been obliged to act as liquidator was a bitter humiliation, and the bitterness was no doubt intensified by his consciousness of the fact that his own financial policy before 1924 was one of the causes that had made national bankruptcy inevitable.

When Poincaré took office again two years ago, his currency policy was complete revalorization. His intention was gradually to bring back the franc to its par value, either by a continuous rise or by stages. It was only with great difficulty that he was persuaded at the beginning of last year to allow the Bank of France to peg the franc at about twenty-five to the dollar, and perhaps he would not have yielded had there not been the beginnings of an industrial crisis. Even then he did not abandon the idea of revalorization by stages—a disastrous method, for it would have meant periodic crises each time that the value of the franc was increased. Even after the last general election he said that France was like a patient requiring a prolonged treatment whose cure would not be hastened by "surgical operations." It is extremely probable that Poincaré himself inspired the campaign against legal stabilization in the *Temps* and other papers after the election, for the purpose of organizing public opinion to support him against the Bank of France and the industrial interests.

Only the threat of Moreau, the governor of the Bank of France, to resign if legal stabilization were longer delayed at last obliged Poincaré to yield, and it is not surprising that he should have resented his forced surrender. When he had consented to legal stabilization there was another fight on the question of the convertibility of bank-notes into gold. Poincaré wished gold at once to be obtainable by anybody asking for it and to circulate as freely as before the war. He was with difficulty persuaded to abandon this policy.

Thus the stabilization of the franc, far from being the work of Poincaré, has been forced upon him, not so much by men as by facts. He was obliged at last to recognize the impossibility of a policy that would have trebled the French budget, have made the service of the national debt alone cost about $5,000,000,000 a year, and ruined French industry into the bargain; but it took a great deal of trouble to make him recognize it. This is to say that the conception of Poincaré as a great finance minister is absurd. He has in fact done nothing, and the policy of which he has been the executor has not been his policy. All that has been done has been done by the Bank of France and the staff of the Finance Department, often in the teeth of Poincaré's opposition. The only reason why Poincaré has succeeded where his predecessors failed is that he has had a majority in Parliament, whereas his predecessors were turned out one after the other as soon as they tried to do anything.

The extraordinary hold of Poincaré on his fellow-countrymen is a remarkable phenomenon, not easy to explain. For he is not and never has been popular in the true sense of the term. Popular heroes in France have usually been southerners, often of foreign origin like Napoleon and Gambetta, nearly always flamboyant orators. Napoleon was not an orator, it is true, but he was decidedly flamboyant, not to say *cabotin*, in spite of his undoubted, although limited, genius. Clemenceau is cynical rather than flamboyant, but he is a chauvinist of the romantic type and he owed his once great popularity to that fact and to his wit. Poincaré, too, is a chauvinist, but not of the romantic type; he is the opposite of flamboyant and is not a great orator. In some respects he is not typically French—no Lorrainer is typically French. He is as methodical as a German and there is something of the English politician in his clear and businesslike statements. Poincaré is one of the very few French politicians able to set out facts and figures methodically and make his case clear. It may be that he inspires confidence on this account—just because he is unlike the rest. But in some respects Poincaré is typical of the French bourgeoisie, or of the French peasant—which comes to much the same thing, for the French bourgeoisie betrays its peasant origin.

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He has the narrowly juridical mentality, the meticulous regard for formulas, the respect for the letter of written documents, the limited shrewdness of outlook. He is in fact very much like a notary, and the French are always ready to intrust their interests to a notary. And he inspires confidence because he knows his own mind, has definite aims, and pursues them with dogged persistence.

Yet this is by no means the first time that Poincaré has been vanquished by circumstances and failed in his policy. One reason no doubt is that he lacks perception and cannot see far enough ahead. When Clemenceau said of him that he knew everything and understood nothing, it was of course a *boutade* in which there was deliberate exaggeration, but there was a great deal of truth in it. When one looks back on the last sixteen years, during which Poincaré has been a dominant influence in French politics, it is hard to say where his policy has succeeded. No doubt his policy in 1912-1914 was one of the most important factors in bringing about the war. When he was elected President of the Republic in January, 1913, Anatole France said at once that it meant war, so did Michel Corday, so did some others of us in Paris. But, although I have no doubt at all as to Poincaré's responsibility for the war, I am not sure that he deliberately willed it. I am rather inclined to think the contrary. Certainly he wished to recover Alsace-Lorraine—he himself has said that its recovery was the only thing that his generation of Frenchmen had to live for; certainly he intended to pursue a spirited foreign policy, "une politique fière," to show that France, as again he himself said in 1912, was not afraid of war; but I doubt whether he had enough perception to realize that his policy was leading to war inevitably. When the war came, it became his persistent aim, not merely to recover Alsace-Lorraine, but to annex the whole of the Rhineland, or at any rate to separate it from Germany. He had not abandoned that aim in 1923, as the Dariac report showed, but he has not attained it and never will. He, with Millerand, destroyed the agreement made by Briand with Lloyd George at Cannes and forced Briand to resign, but a few years later he was obliged to accept Locarno, which was the outcome of the Cannes failure and much to be preferred from every point of view, except that of the French chauvinist. He invaded the Ruhr, refusing Bonar Law's offer to cancel the French debt to England if he would refrain, in order to force Germany to pay grotesque sums in reparations, and the only result was that he was obliged to accept the Dawes Plan, which was an admission that she could not pay them. For, although Herriot had become Prime Minister when the Dawes Plan actually went through, Poincaré had accepted it in principle before he went out of office in 1924. Since Poincaré became Prime Minister again in 1926, it is true that he has wrecked the Thoiry agreement, as he previously wrecked that of Cannes, but, although he has postponed a Franco-German understanding and may postpone it further, I do not think that he will be able permanently to prevent it. It is even possible that Poincaré may be the Prime Minister to evacuate the Rhineland, if he remains in office longer than Austen Chamberlain.

In short, Poincaré's career has been a failure. He has done those things that he would not have done and left undone those things that he would have done. But, as J. M. Keynes said the other day in the London *Nation*, politicians "are the interpreters, not the masters, of our fate. It is their job, in short, to register the *fait accompli*." So we may say that, in the matter of stabilization, as in the other matters mentioned, Poincaré has done his job.

Brokers and "Suckers"

By ROBERT RYAN

DURING the spring months of this year the customers' rooms of Wall Street's brokerage houses were overflowing with a new type of speculator. In these broad rooms you could see feverish young men and heated elders, eyes intent upon the ticker tape. The ranks of the inexperienced—the "suckers"—were swelled by numbers of men who had been attracted by newspaper stories of the big, easy profits to be made in a tremendous bull market, of millions captured overnight by the Fisher Brothers, Arthur Cutten, and Durant. At first these newcomers risked a few hundred dollars with some broker they knew, discovered that it was easy to make money this way, and finally made their headquarters in the broker's large customers' room, bringing with them their entire checking and savings accounts.

These amateurs were not schooled in markets that had seen stringent, panicky drops in prices. They came in on a rising tide. They speculated on tips, on hunches, on "follow-the-leader" principles. When a stock rose sharply they all jumped for it—and frequently were left holding the bag of higher prices. They would sell or buy on the slightest notice, usually obeying implicitly the advice of their broker.

Out of this combustible desire to trade in and out of the market, abuses have arisen. Some brokers, none too scrupulous, have taken advantage of the helplessness of the small customer. The broker can make more commissions by rapid trading than by holding stocks for real appreciation in value, and he knows that this particular type of customer is here today and gone tomorrow. He must make commissions while the money shines.

Sometime ago I spent about two months in a busy broker's office. I had been offered a position as customer's man (to get new accounts and keep them posted on the market's doings). As I wanted to see whether I would like this work, I asked for a two months' period in which to learn the business. The broker with whom I became associated is considered reliable and honest, and the offer was supposedly an attractive one. I sat in the private office of the president and was thus able to follow quite minutely the methods by which he conducted his business. Years of experience with ordinary business had given me no hint of the practices I saw occur as everyday procedure—in the main practices highly prejudicial to the average customer's interest. So astonished was I that I questioned several other Wall Street brokers, only to find that the practices I saw were common enough on the Street, indulged in more or less generally by large and small firms.

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There are two ways in which stock may be bought through a broker. One is to limit the price by stipulating exactly what the broker may pay. For instance, if you wished to buy General Motors stock, you would see on the ticker tape that the last quoted sale was at $194 a share. If you were willing to pay that price or less you would order your broker to buy 50 shares at $194. In this way, if the price had jumped a point or so after the quotation you saw, you would not buy the stock, but your order would stand at $194 until you got the stock at that price or canceled the order. It might also happen that if the stock had a temporary recession, you would get it at less than $194 a share.

The other method of buying is to give a "market order." Thus, in the same circumstances as those above, if General Motors had a sudden rise in price you would pay the current rate being quoted on the Stock Exchange floor. It might be $194.50, $196, or more, as the stock responded to buying. Or if the stock were selling for less, you would also pay the current quotation. When placing a market order you cannot tell what price you will pay for your stock.

I shall list here a few of the incidents I witnessed while in the office. On Thursday the partner of Mr. X, whose name I shall conceal, had bought some shares of Arabian bank stock at $440 a share. This stock was not listed on the Stock Exchange but was dealt in by over-the-counter houses (houses which deal in unlisted securities). These firms make their own prices, determined solely by the demand for the stock. There is usually a marked difference in quotations by these houses, and the practice is to call several of them before buying in order to get the best price. On Friday morning a customer of Mr. X telephoned an order to sell 50 shares of Arabian bank stock. Mr. X obtained his permission to sell "at the best price." He called to his partner, "Want any more of that Arabian bank stock?"

"At what price?" answered Mr. Y. "I paid $440 a share yesterday."

"You can have this for less," said Mr. X. "I've got a market order. The market is 415 bid, 445 offered. Want it at 415?"

"Sure," said Mr. Y. And the customer was informed that it was too bad he got such a low price—but after all, "we sold it at the market."

The dishonesty of this transaction lies in the fact that if several firms had been called and the stock offered for sale, a better price could have been obtained, for this was an active stock in good demand with a wide difference between the bid-and-ask prices.

Incident No. 2: This firm was "bullish" on a certain stock—they believed its price would go higher. Suddenly a panic developed in the stock and it began to decline at a rapid rate. The large and small customers who owned the stock all began selling at once. When the selling confirmations came in, Mr. X announced that no selling prices could be given out until all the orders were checked. In the next half hour Mr. X and his partners selected those sales which had brought the best prices, allotted these best prices to their larger customers, and allowed the small fry to get what was left. This is obviously unfair discrimination. A record is kept by the order clerk of the sequence in which the selling orders are placed. Consequently, the prices of the sales should have been allotted in that order. "Of course," Mr. X remarked, "we make most money from our large customers, and we must keep them satisfied."

Incident No. 3: The broker charges a standard—and substantial—commission on the orders he executes, yet it is common practice among all firms to borrow money at, let us say, 5 per cent and charge 6 per cent to their customers who buy on margin. The Stock Exchange has ruled that brokers may charge their customers the exact amount of interest, or more than the exact amount, that they themselves have to pay when they borrow the money in the open market or from banks; but in no case may brokers charge the customers *less* than the brokers pay in borrowing the money. This rule has been promulgated in order that brokers may not offer the extra inducement of a reduced interest rate to large speculators in order to acquire them as customers. This rule does away with a great deal of cut-throat competition; but in practice the large customer is actually charged the same amount of interest as the broker pays or very little more, while the small customer pays an average of ¾ of one per cent additional on all money which he uses when buying on margin. This ¾ of one per cent, various brokers have told me, is intended to cover the entire overhead cost of their business. This means that the commissions which are paid for buying or selling the stock are net income to the brokerage house. It is easy to understand why brokerage houses insist that they are justified in charging this so-called "service fee" for negotiating a loan for a client.

Incident No. 4: Mr. X stepped into the customers' room and announced with a great show of sagacity that "Pomegranate A" was a purchase at current prices, and that he advised immediate purchase. His advice was quickly followed; there was general buying by the customers who thought they saw an opportunity to make some quick money. A few minutes later Mr. X notified one of his large customers that he had sold 1,500 shares of "Pomegranate A" at excellent prices, and received the client's congratulations for a good "execution." Those customers in the big room who bought on Mr. X's advice paid 6 per cent or more on their money, and watched the stock drop in value. The story behind this transaction was enlightening. Mr. X's large customer had heard from a director of "Pomegranate A" that the quarterly dividend would not be paid and that this fact would be announced in a few days. Knowing that the stock would drop in price after such an announcement, Mr. X's customer gave immediate orders to sell at the current prices. Mr. X knew that "Pomegranate A" was a volatile stock and that if he dumped 1,500 shares on the market it would break the price of the stock. So, by getting his small customers to buy these shares, he placed a cushion under the stock to absorb the 1,500 shares he was selling. He sold at no sacrifice and induced his smaller customers to buy stock which he knew would decline in value.

Incident No. 5: A "pool" is made to maintain current prices in a certain stock or push those prices higher. Mr. X was in a pool to raise the price on "New York Rug." This pool had made a substantial profit by the time its price had been shoved up to $212 a share. Thereupon the members of the pool decided to liquidate their holdings and take their profits. Mr. X knew that this stock was not worth $212 a share and that when the pool had distributed its holdings the stock would drop in value. Mr. X had put a large number of his customers into this stock

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at high prices. When any of them called to inquire about it he answered cheerfully, "It's good for $250 a share. Yes, I'm holding mine." So his customers held on.

When Mr. X and his friends had finished taking their profits by selling the stock and the news had come out on the floor that the pool had disbanded there was a great deal of "short selling." (If you believe a stock is selling at a price above its real value, you sell it and buy it back at a lower price—if you are lucky.) These "short sales" forced the stock down, and it was only then that Mr. X telephoned his customers that he understood the stock was a sale at once, and watched his customers receive much lower prices.

Incident No. 6: Mr. X advised all his customers to buy "Rotton Apples Common." Since Mr. X's firm helped to finance the stock issue their interest in selling this stock could hardly be wholly disinterested.

It would be simple to multiply these incidents and cite other practices, but what I suggested in the first part of this article has, I believe, been amply shown: in every case under my observation the broker felt that he must give the advantage, even though it were a dishonest advantage, to his large customer, for the large customer is his bread and butter and his profits. The small investor or speculator remains completely unaware of these practices. In a rising market such methods may be employed without losing the customer's business, for a speculator will overlook small irregularities as long as he continues to make money; while in a declining market the broker gets away with an equal amount of dishonesty, the customer blames the results on market drops. If a customer loses all his money, or so dislikes the actions of Mr. X's firm that he withdraws his business, Mr. X is completely unconcerned. As he remarked to me: "Suckers are born every minute; the glamor of easy money gets them all. One goes, two come in. Win or lose, we get our commissions." It is an easy-going philosophy which has been so completely proved true by many Wall Street brokers that they have no reason to revise it.

How such practices can be stopped I do not know; nor do I imagine that it is within the power of the Stock Exchange authorities to prevent them. I do believe that one step ahead would be to forbid all brokerage houses or their employees to transact business for themselves, to compel them to act solely as customers' agents. Surely this would make them a trifle more disinterested in the advice they give their clients.

In the meantime Mr. X's firm is making money hand over fist. In another month they will move to quarters three times their present space.

In the Driftway

"COLOR movies" are the latest invention of those persistent persons who are unflagging in their attempts to make art just like life, and the Drifter is in a dreadful state of depression at the prospect. And not only are amateur photographers to be able to take pictures in color, but the synchronization of sound with movement is to be perfected, so that a red-headed man shouting to his black-haired wife will come out unmercifully red and black and noisy, and the cooing of a pale, adolescent suitor to his rouged and lip-sticked lady will not be softened one whit from the painful truth!

* * * * *

THE Drifter denies heatedly that this is a pessimistic viewpoint. For what is the purpose of the motion picture or the drama or fiction or poetry or any work of the imagination? It is to be just that—a work of the imagination. Often enough critics of the "realistic" school of fiction have complained that these sour novels are not really like life; and conversely, audiences at depressingly sordid plays have moaned that "there is enough trouble in life. People go to the theater to be amused." The truth of the matter is somewhere in between. For life itself is so unbearably intricate, so unutterably beautiful or so hideously cruel that a faithful representation of it by way of art would be more than any reader or listener could endure. It would blast the ears, it would blind the eyes. Art simplifies life, narrows it, softens it to the point where it can be observed without acute pain. Thus the song of the wood thrush, the color of the evening sky, the din of steam riveters, and a movie director's idea of a tastefully furnished house had better remain as unobtrusive as possible.

* * * * *

ALL this is assuming that the motion picture is art or that it will be. The Drifter has his own opinion about the matter, but he has been called a crabbed pessimist so often that he refuses to be quoted on the subject. Plenty of persons promise that some day the movies will be in the same class with Michelangelo and Milton, and stranger things undoubtedly have happened. But they will never achieve this eminence by the photographic synchronization of form and color and sound. Milton's characters are angels and devils, Michelangelo's are gods. Life is certainly not like that. Nor does anybody want it to be, least of all the Drifter. He himself asks little of life and only a little more of art. He does not go to the movies and he abjures the talkies like a pestilence. For him the graceful young men at the Paramount—or is it Roxy's?—are phantoms ushering shadowy patrons to imaginary plush chairs. They might be characters in fiction, just as Becky Sharpe or Tom Jones might be his neighbors. What he sees with his eyes he cannot quite believe, be it never so faithfully colored or so exactly sounded. What enters into his mind becomes part of his mind, no matter how "unreal," how "unlifelike." When the movies stop trying to imitate and begin to originate the Drifter will cheerfully—every once in a while—pay his money at the gate and sit through the evening's program.

* * * * *

THE Drifter has received the following note from S. M. Reynolds, managing editor of the Baltimore *Sun*, in regard to the story about President Coolidge quoted from that journal:

> In view of the very complimentary references in your column in *The Nation* of June 20, I thought that you would be interested in knowing that the author of the story referred to is Mr. Max Ways, one of the younger members of the *Sun* staff. Incidentally, Mr. Ways is the son of the late Max Ways, Sr., who was for many years one of the outstanding newspapermen of Baltimore.

THE DRIFTER

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In Reply to Senator Norris

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In your issue of July 18 Senator G. W. Norris states that the same interests which controlled the Republican convention at Kansas City controlled the Democratic convention at Houston. The Senator asks: What are the people going to do about it? And then answers as follows: "It seems to me about the only thing we can do is to call the attention of the people to the fundamental difficulty—our Electoral College."

Senator Norris is right—the Electoral College should be abolished and the people given the power to nominate and elect the President directly; but how best "to call the attention of the people" to the direct nomination and election of the President is the practical question.

Many Progressives believe that if the actual operation of the Electoral College could be brought home to this generation the old system would easily give way to the new. In other words, if in a close national election a strong independent like Senator Norris were in the field, he would carry several States and elect a sufficient number of independent Presidential electors to hold the balance of power in the Electoral College, and thereby demonstrate to the people that they do not elect the President in November, but that the President is elected the following year when the electoral vote is cast, and failing there of a majority, the election passes to the House of Representatives.

If Senator Norris should reconsider the Farmer-Labor nomination and accept the same (or he failing to do so, some other Progressive accept it) and carry Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Nebraska, the independent Presidential electors might hold, are likely to hold, the balance of power in the Electoral College, cause the election to go into the House of Representatives, and thereby demonstrate to the people that they do not elect their own President under the antiquated Electoral College method now in vogue.

Whittier, California, July 22 ARTHUR G. WRAY

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Senator Norris evidently believes that election of the President of the United States by direct vote of the people would weaken our two-party system and improve the chances of a new party. The two-party system, however, has prevailed in our State elections of governors as well as in the elections for Parliament in Great Britain, although such elections are by the direct vote of the people. The election of our President by direct vote, i. e., election of the candidate that receives the largest number of votes all over the country, would eliminate the pivotal States and rid us of the corrupt efforts to win such States, but the two-party system is sure to remain on account of the eagerness of party leaders to insure success at the November election by harmonizing the most discordant elements at the nominating convention.

In Germany there are forty-one political parties, and France and other continental countries of Europe find no trouble to escape the two-party system. The second election in these countries, when no candidate receives a majority of all votes cast at the first election, encourages the organization of sincere groups interested in certain issues into political parties.

No efforts are made to attract members of differing views by meaningless or ambiguous platforms or to resort to the desperate methods to bring about harmony within the party which prevail under the two-party system. When a majority of the votes cast does not elect any one, there is a second election ahead to decide between the leading candidates. Before this second election occur the conversations and negotiations between the political parties that result in cartels of parties supporting the same candidate in the final election.

A split of the Republican Party was fatal in 1912 and gave the Presidency to the Democrat Woodrow Wilson. The split might have proved harmless if a second election had been necessary because Wilson did not receive a majority of all votes cast, and the Roosevelt party and Taft party might have formed a cartel for the final election.

Los Angeles, July 19 C. M. ENNS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The recent letter of Senator Norris to *The Nation* deserves attention. He sketches the apparent indifference of the public to corruption and to the growth of the power trust, and comes to the conclusion that we can make no progress until we have changed the Constitution, abolished the Electoral College, and established the system of voting directly for President.

This amazing position not only gives up the ship, because it is obvious that it would take a generation at least to secure such a constitutional amendment, but it is opposed to reason and to experience. Convenient election machinery is not necessary in order to put over great ideas. All that is necessary is to educate the people, and they will make use of whatever machinery there is at hand to register their will.

The truth is that it is entirely feasible to get the names of candidates, other than of the major parties, upon our ballot, as experience abundantly proves. The Socialists and Prohibitionists have done it for a generation. Roosevelt and Johnson did it in 1912. The ridiculous Farmer-Labor Party did it in 1920; La Follette and Wheeler did it in 1924. It would be entirely feasible to put Senator Norris's name on the ballot in every State this year, if he cared to run.

The real trouble is that the progressive and radical leaders cannot agree upon any political program which will stand the discussion of a campaign. The Socialist program makes no appeal to thoughtful people. The Roosevelt platform in 1912 was a jumble of aspirations and palliatives. The La Follette platform of 1924 had eleven planks, all of which except one were superficial, unrelated each to the other, or to the abolition of monopoly. The plank for government ownership of railroads was the only fundamental declaration, and both La Follette and Wheeler got scared and never mentioned it during the campaign. Their speeches were a wearisome repetition of stale attacks upon big business, without any constructive plan for abolishing or lessening monopoly.

Jersey City, July 23 GEORGE L. RECORD

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Senator Norris's suggestion in regard to abolishing the Electoral College system of electing a President is the typical expression of a sincere but misguided idealist. His plan might make it harder for the mosquitoes to get in, but the scientific method nowadays is to try to destroy the eggs and larvae at the source.

If "the great trusts, particularly the water-power trust, control the destiny of our republic," is it logical to think that they would be fooled by any change in the system of election? Is it not as clear as the Senator's nose that as long as these trusts have tremendous power and as long as it is to their interest as private and therefore power-desiring organizations to control our destiny, the only conceivable remedy is to abolish this prime incentive by nationalizing them? Is it not a fact that cries to heaven that while we are tinkering with our political machinery, down in the economic boiler-room the pressure is increasing to a dangerous degree? Come down into the boiler-room, Senator, and have a look around. And then take off your Senatorial frock and pitch into it. Never mind about the machinery on the upper floors.

Brooklyn, New York, July 18 PHILIP POLLACK

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Correspondence

"Zu Ehren von Al Smith"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR:

Ich sitze hier beim Pilsner Bier
Und denke an Al Smith.
Ich trank bis jetzt der Krügel vier
Zum Wohle von Al Smith.
Und bin ich voll mit Gerstensaft,
Dann rufe ich aus voller Kraft:
Three cheers for wet Al Smith!
Auch cocktails trink ich dann und wann
Zu Ehren von Al Smith.
Die highballs kommen später dran,
Es lebe dear old Smith!
Und wird er endlich Präsident
Dann sing ich frank und frei,
Vorerst da shake ich his hand,
For he never will be dry.

Osijek, Czecho-Slovakia, July 15 JULIUS PFEIFFER

Ocean Liners' Limits

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: A coincidence in a recent evening's reading included the item in *The Nation* of July 18 giving comparative lengths and tonnages of the huge transatlantic liners already in operation and the new Oceanic now under construction, and a paragraph from "The Education of Henry Adams."

Henry Adams was in the heat of his advanced-middle-age revival of his pursuit of education, and at the time was engrossed in trying to figure out the economic relation between the panic of 1893 and the wonders of the Exposition at Chicago, which he visited the same year. He says:

> Historical exhibits were common, but they never went far enough; none were thoroughly worked out. One of the best was that of the Cunard steamers, but still a student hungry for results found himself obliged to waste a pencil and several sheets of paper trying to calculate exactly when, according to the given increase of power, tonnage, and speed, the growth of the ocean steamer would reach its limits. His figures brought him, he thought, to the year 1927; another generation to spare before force, space, and time should meet. The ocean steamer ran the surest line of triangulation into the future, because it was the nearest of man's products to a unity; railroads taught less because they seemed already finished except for mere increase in number; explosives taught most, but needed a tribe of chemists, physicists, and mathematicians to explain.

Spokane, Washington, July 18 EDITH D. ABBOTT

As Seen in Arkansas

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In *The Nation* of July 11 you speak of Smith, Catholic, Wet, and Tammany, linked in trial marriage to Robinson, Protestant, Dry, and anti-Negro. I can see no incongruity in the fact that a Catholic and a Protestant are the standard-bearers of the Democratic Party. In fact, though a Protestant, I am very glad indeed that a Catholic is heading the ticket. It will give us another opportunity to make an open fight on intolerance and bigotry. The Ku Klux Klan, Anti-Saloon League preachers, and others here in Arkansas say that Robinson is not a Dry and never has been.

Robinson may be anti-Negro, as you charge, but there are thousands of Negroes in Arkansas who are going to vote for Smith and Robinson. One Negro leader said that his people had been voting the Republican ticket for sixty years, which was, he believed, long enough to show their gratitude to the Republican Party for having freed them, and it was their desire now to express their admiration for Senator Robinson. If you still believe fundamental American rights, guaranteed by the Constitution, are denied to Americans whose skins happen to be dark, I suggest that you send a representative to Little Rock next November and watch them vote.

There will be a fight on the Democratic ticket in the South this year. The Dry organizations, Ku Kluxers, Mystic Knights, political preachers are calling mass meetings and circulating petitions which pledge the signers to vote only for a Dry for President. They are asking the people not to waste their vote on a third party nor to stay at home but to come to the polls and cast their ballots for Hoover. Whether this movement will continue and gain force or die out, I do not know. I hope it continues, not that I am in sympathy with it, but I would like to see a spirited fight here in the South. It will be a great aid to liberalism. The prohibition question has got to be fought out and settled before we can move on to economic issues which are more important.

You say, "The fact remains that it is the same old Democratic Party with which we have to deal," but I am inclined to believe with the New York *World* and the Chicago *Tribune* that we are dealing with a new party, very different, at least, from the party of Bryan.

Senator Nye says the heritage of hate keeps the South solid. What heritage keeps the West Republican? Why are the Hoover-baiters clamoring to get on his bandwagon? Even Brookhart, I understand, is a great Hoover supporter.

But there is one man out West who is a consistent progressive and one of America's ablest men, who is not guilty of crow-eating and turning political somersaults, that is, Norris.

Little Rock, Arkansas, July 15 FORREST F. REED

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Books

Hamlet in Modern Dress

By JAMES RORTY

Nymph, in thy orisons, do not forget
A certain poet who had laughed
Himself half way to wisdom, having set
Guards at the gate of his eternal city
Fiercely to slay the beggars of self-pity . . .
Half way, I said; hence, maiden, waft
A prayer into that infinite
Air that laves the world, wherein we sow
Fear, grief, desire, deeds, the bright
Keen lust of satyrs and the dream of saints.
This air we breathe, and whoso faints
Has need of laughter; so
Go to, my girl . . . get thee to a nunnery, the poet's mad;
Who's he to blow the bubble of your world?
The time is out of joint; his lips are curled.

Mighty Is Man

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

To the body of woman man turns and seeks deliverance
From his world grown strange since deliverance from her thighs;
To the womb he turns, to his infancy's paradise,
Blind with a dream, an outcast weary of severance.

From the body of woman man rises with exultation
Shaking his veins. Singing, he whets a sword.
He is freed of his weakness now, he has loosed the cord
That binds him to alien mysteries of creation.

Again he is mighty, he stamps for joy of his strength;
His words, his deeds will be clamorous round the earth.
Woman, who bore him, merely gives him rebirth
Who returns to spurn, and return again, at length,

To the grieved eternal breast that lulled him since life began,
To the eyes that smile in the dark on that baffled Antaeus, Man.

How to Change Things

Marx and Lenin: The Science of Revolution. By Max Eastman. Albert and Charles Boni. $2.

SOME people want a social revolution. Others of us prefer other methods of getting forward. Still others don't want to move at all; they are too comfortable where they are. Max Eastman's is a good book for all three classes. It contains a vast amount of shrewd good sense about revolutions, mixed, in my judgment, with some nonsense. Written by one who wants to show how to make a communist revolution, it is essentially a devastating attack on orthodox Marxism, from the standpoint of instrumental thinking as opposed to Hegelian metaphysics. Mr. Eastman wants the Socialists to rescue Marx the practical revolutionist from Marx the Hegelian dialectician. He wants the Communists to follow the real Lenin, the hard-headed, tireless engineer of revolution, rather than the metaphysical Lenin, the fierce Marxian dogmatist. Marx was wrong, Lenin right—thus Mr. Eastman.

Communicants in the Marxian church and worshipers in the Moscow synagogue alike are bound to curse this book and stone its author, despite his friendly purpose. For orthodox Marxism, the official religion of the Socialists, which is likewise professed in Russia, has abandoned God only to set up a new god, named the Forces of Production, who is inevitably producing socialism out of capitalism by the machinery of class struggle and consequent proletarian dictatorship. Bosh! says Mr. Eastman, truly enough; history is producing nothing. Revolutions are brought about by men who actually will them and under certain circumstances succeed in pulling them off. That is what Lenin did.

Marxism as science, and not as metaphysics, declares Mr. Eastman, asserts simply, on the basis of historical observation, that the major forces controlling society are economic class interests, that wealth production is becoming more cooperative and its control more centralized, and that, therefore, the only possible revolutionary plan is to transfer that control to the producers themselves through the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, which can expropriate the present owners. This done, "human society could begin to move in the direction of freedom, and political sincerity, and international peace, and an opportunity of life for every member of it."

Despite his orthodox, contemptuous rejection of "utopian-evangelical" methods of reform, Mr. Eastman certainly lets loose a very large serpent among the fig-trees of the revolutionary garden. If revolutionary will and purpose count, so do counter-revolutionary and even despised bourgeois-reform purpose. The very acts of hard-fisted capitalists and soft-headed reformers are in sober fact changing the total of circumstances that condition the action of the clear-eyed revolutionist who knows what's what. Behold Mr. Eastman's own doubt: Outside Russia "just at the present moment it is apparently not possible to break down capitalism." Is it possible that it was something else that broke down in Russia? Some of us who love capitalism none too well suspect as much. Says Lenin: "Only when the masses do not want the old regime, and when the rulers are unable to govern as of old, only then can a revolution succeed."

True enough, and scant comfort to American revolutionaries, if such there be. For in manifest fact, the exploited American workingman and farmer still ride in their Fords from the movie palace to the polls to vote for Coolidges and Hardings, and apparently they will keep on voting for them so long as they can continue to get three square meals a day, and so long as too many half-wit juries do not acquit the Dohenys and Falls and Sinclairs and Stewarts. (Incidentally, the meals keep on getting squarer.) Doubtless the interests of the "exploited masses" are irreconcilably opposed to those of Messrs. Coolidge and Co. Yet neither W. Z. Foster nor the already forgotten Farmer Townley, nor even *The Nation* itself has yet succeeded in convincing them of that fact; and here is Mr. Hoover all ready to lead a united people triumphantly forward into a newly opened and yet more luxuriously upholstered wing of our capitalist heaven—unless they stop for a drink by the way. Such facts did not greatly trouble the old-fashioned Socialist, for he was sure that the god of productive forces would in due time grind out a revolution; they are calculated to give long pause to "scientific" rather than metaphysical revolutionists. The lessons of history may not be so clear after all.

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Possibly we shall yet see a progressive lessening, not a sudden destruction, of the power of property owners, though the utilities investigation is calculated to shake any but the most robust faith in anything short of extreme communism. Still, some of us are hopeful—fatuously so, Mr. Eastman would observe.

A concluding observation concerning this admirable and stimulating book. Some people's skepticism extends even to post-dated Russian checks drawn on the Bank of the Future, much as we should like to honor them. Some of us soft-headed ones still believe that the road to liberty for advanced peoples lies through regions of gradually increasing freedom, and not over a magic carpet of all-wise, all-benevolent dictatorship. We are accordingly bound to ponder certain of Mr. Eastman's observations by the way: that "wholesale curtailments of liberty and violations of their own ultimate ideal of social relations, are a necessary and intrinsic part of the plan of action of all scientific revolutionists"; that the essence of the Russian political situation is the unshakable dominance of the Communist Party, which holds "a position in the new state not unlike that occupied by the personal sovereign in the old"; that the most unsatisfactory feature of the Russian experiment is the failure to establish a great system of education, in place of which has been set up "this great solemn fetish of dialectic materialism, which is nothing but the old shoes of Almighty God"; and that the second most unsatisfactory feature is the absence of a direct and simple purpose "to see to it that the proletarian dictatorship and the collective ownership of the means of production shall create *to the full extent possible at any stage of its development*, a free and true human society." Alas! After ten years here is another full-sized serpent in the garden.

HENRY RAYMOND MUSSEY

Summer Reading

The Battle of the Horizons. By Sylvia Thompson. Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

her knight comes riding. By John V. A. Weaver. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

IN her rather mediocre, rather likable and well-intentioned variation on the old theme of the American venturing to amalgamate his crudities with European subtleties, Miss Thompson has made the rather usual mistake of comparing unlike quantities on the assumption that they are like, except for the racial differences. The rather preposterous little simpleton she calls Athene comes from a wealthy, socially prominent and non-literate American family. She leaps at the romantic possibilities of marriage with the son of an English baronet. There are newly rich even in England, and any newly rich English girl would equally well have served such contrasts as Miss Thompson has achieved, and would have saved her revealing her ignorance of Americans. Athene may have aroused some smiles in England; she would have been razzed to death in America. The author had a real idea of her as a person, a more real idea than was embodied in Carol Kennicott; but she failed to shape the various good hunches into a recognizable whole, and in any case, they are scattered about too widely in the general morass induced by thinking rightly about life in terms of neat little invented characters.

Mr. Weaver gives a beautiful exhibition of a boxer dancing skilfully all around a great hulking opponent without ever getting inside his defenses. The opponent is his theme. No one could ask a better theme than the conflict in the individual of those adventurous impulses which send an occasional hardy soul rolling around the world gathering no moss—if moss is to be construed as home, family, income, and position—but gathering a various and possibly non-negotiable lore, with the impulse to clothe one's nakedness in a fine mesh of habit and to spend the years achieving security for further years. But Mr. Weaver has wedded the desire for adventure and romance to a certain scurviness of soul, in order to point a moral in favor of more homespun virtues. Moreover, he has seen such a nice little tight little Freudian fable in the possible influence of a romantic rapscallion father on an adoring girl that he has thrown overboard most of the possibilities of his theme.

His command of current argot, those lively phrases that seem to be precipitated out of the New York air, and that sometimes afford unexpected glimpses into the lives of those who use them, is as entertaining in this book as in his poems. And he paints all his characters with that superficial honesty that is one of the first steps to virtue in a novelist, and that the reader is increasingly surprised and delighted to find behind the new jackets. It takes a certain paroxysm of the soul to discover more than superficial truths in any thing or person, and of anything so pathological as such a paroxysm, Mr. Weaver is blithely guiltless. He adheres to the general belief that a novel can be a Sahara desert, provided it goes somewhere and is on to a racket or two. But this is not to be held against him. He would be an exception if he clung to the fantastic view that each paragraph and each page should justify its existence.

ALICE BEAL PARSONS

More About "Mother India"

Father India. A Reply to Mother India. By C. S. Ranga Iyer, member of the Indian Legislative Assembly. Louis Carrier and Company. $2.

Miss Mayo's Mother India. A Rejoinder. By K. Natarajan, Editor the *Indian Social Reformer*. Madras: G. A. Natesan and Company. 12 annas.

ONLY a person with an untrained and unreflective mind would ever have attempted what Miss Mayo did in her "Mother India." Without a single evident misgiving she endeavored, on the basis of a few months of travel and a small amount of reading, to appraise the public health, morals, economic state, politics, and religion of over three hundred million people. That she failed has been shown abundantly in numerous reviews, articles, and books. Errors of fact and interpretation have been pointed out by many writers in such great number that there is now hardly a point in her arraignment left unimpaired.

The two books here noticed make havoc of much of her argument. Mr. Natarajan's method is chiefly direct refutation—to point out errors, to show the antiquity and unreliability of many of her authorities, to give her the lie direct in regard to many of her specific quotations from Indians. Mr. Iyer uses somewhat the same method, but adds to it an entertaining running commentary of the "tu quoque" sort, to indicate that bad as Miss Mayo says (erroneously) things are in India, they are even worse in America; and he bases this part of his work chiefly on the writings of Judge Ben Lindsey.

In connection with all the controversy aroused by "Mother India" there is one point of some importance that still needs to be cleared up, namely, how Miss Mayo came to undertake an "investigation" of India. She herself in her book gives us to understand that the moving force was solely her own inner consciousness. Yet in an address last January before the Contemporary Club in Philadelphia she told a different story. She stated, according to my recollection, that two prominent officers of the Rockefeller Foundation called her to the foundation's offices in New York, where they laid before her a mass of statistics concerning the appalling state of public health in India, and spoke in despair of ever getting the world to realize what a menace the country is. Here was where she could help. She was to take this material of theirs, go to India herself to see the land and the people and accumulate what she calls "test facts," and then with the application of her literary skill present a shocking and forceful picture of this menace that would move the world to protest. This, of course, makes the Rockefeller

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Foundation appear to be the father of the volume to which she has given birth.

It would be well if both she and the Rockefeller Foundation would make statements in detail about the complicity, if any, between the two. Certainly the foundation should do so, and, if possible, remove from itself the odium of having begot her offspring. It will not help the public health work which is supported in India by the foundation's funds to have this claim of hers stand unrefuted. W. NORMAN BROWN

A Westminster Exhibitionist

Winston Churchill. By "Ephesian." Robert M. McBride and Company. $5.

THE anonymous author of this life of Winston Churchill has not approached his task in any critical mood. His tremendous admiration for his subject is evident in every page—an admiration obviously inspired by the quick brain, the abundant vitality, and the unquenchable self-confidence which, all agree, characterize the present Chancellor of the British Exchequer. These are the qualities which make him so picturesque and interesting a figure. But Ephesian makes it very clear, though no doubt unintentionally, that Churchill's use of his talents has been mainly that of the ambitious politician, not that of the statesman. In the inconsistencies of his career only one consistency is apparent—his determination to keep in the forefront of the political stage with the limelight centered truly upon him.

Churchill entered Parliament as one of the great Tory majority of 1900. The silent obedience, expected of new members of the government party, irked him, however, and he soon became a stalwart critic of the Cabinet. Before the next election he passed over to the Liberals, ostensibly on the tariff issue, but actually, as Ephesian admits, because his merits had not been recognized. The Liberals proved more discerning. He became an Under Secretary and in 1908 was promoted to the presidency of the Board of Trade with a seat in the Cabinet.

The next two years were perhaps the most socially useful of his career. His office was closely connected with the various reforms that were then being enacted. In the promotion of such, and in assisting Lloyd George in attacks on the House of Lords, he found a constructive outlet for his energies and plenty of opportunities to bask in the sunshine of popular applause. His speeches during this era make strange reading now that he has returned to the fold of true-blue reaction.

Unhappily, cabinet reconstruction changed his position to that of Home Secretary, whose duties include control of the London police. He was thus responsible for the ridiculous episode of the battle of Sidney Street, where horse, foot, and artillery were brought into action against a gang of criminals. But worse was to follow when in 1911 he was placed in charge of the Admiralty. Two years before he had opposed increased estimates for the navy and had attacked the theory that war with Germany was inevitable. Now he was, to use the words of his biographer, "bursting with ideas for future wars," calling for more ships, making ready to do battle with the Central European Powers. Ephesian, of course, believes that 1914 merely proved how right his hero was and how great his foresight. It does not occur to him that the war became inevitable just because Churchill and many other men in authority of many nationalities were preparing secretly, strenuously, and hopefully for "Der Tag."

In the election immediately after the war Churchill made a speech advocating nationalization of the railways. Ephesian mentions this as an unaccountable indiscretion, but it seems probable that Churchill, who as Minister of Munitions had successfully organized a variety of collectivist activities, had a temporary vision of himself as Minister of Transport inaugurating and controlling a national railway system. It is a tragedy

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that his energies and his love of power were not harnessed to such a task. Instead he was made Minister of War with a huge army on his hands and nothing to do but demobilize it. It was a pitiful position for a man of action who believed himself a great strategist. Soldiers had been the favorite toys of his childhood. The interest had never died and now with millions to his command he was ordered to put them back in their boxes. For two years he did his best to find a new war. But his attempt to start a crusade against bolshevism was defeated, largely through the efforts of the Labor Party.

Thus started a bitter feud that seems likely to govern the rest of Churchill's political life. It was intensified when the Labor Party kept him out of Parliament at two successive elections. That, and the dwindling opportunities offered by membership of the Liberal Party, made him rejoin the Tory fold, where he dabbles in protectionist measures he once denounced, and earns applause from the Diehards by fierce attacks on positions he once defended—the legal rights of trade unions, for instance. Ephesian suggests that he will be the next Tory Prime Minister. That is the highest of ambition's hurdles and perhaps he will take it, but, it is worth while to remember, many of his colleagues do not trust his mercurial temperament. It was Viscount Cecil, as genuine a Tory as ever breathed, who once described Churchill in the following emendation of Dryden's lines, overlooked by Ephesian:

> Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong;
> Was everything by starts and nothing long;
> But, in the course of one revolving moon,
> Was scribbler, painter, statesman, and buffoon.

No member of the opposition will attempt to improve on that verdict.

KEITH HUTCHISON

Fiction Shorts

Rejections of 1927. Edited by Charles H. Baker. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.

This well-meaning compilation of short stories that have been sternly returned from editorial sancta is admirably calculated to give at least a pin-prick to the illusion that every successful fiction writer retains, deep down in his deck, one manuscript of really high quality which no editor will touch. The contents of this anthology are without exception excellent machine products; and the big-fiction magnates who rejected them must have done so out of sheer whimsicality. Mr. Baker deserves some appreciation for having dug out an incredibly tawdry tale by Arthur Schnitzler, interesting if only for the proof it affords that the manufacture of adroit hokum is not an American monopoly.

The Bitter End. By John Brophy. E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

A slow-moving war novel about an adolescent who massed love and lust and perversion in a single amorphous lump. Mr. Brophy is most interesting when describing the sordidness of trench life, which he seems to know at first hand; but his analysis of the sex-scared young hero hampered by Victorian prudery is labored and long-winded, nullifying the obvious earnestness with which he writes. The blue pencil would have quickened the story's tempo and repaired its jerky sequences at the same time.

The Death of Society. By Romer Wilson. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

A welcome reprint of a novel which seven years ago won for its author the Hawthornden Prize. Its mystic conviction and its theme may elicit a tuppenny sneer from professional realists who cannot believe that two people can carry on a profound and impassioned love affair without understanding each other's language. But "The Death of Society" should outlive the realists and perhaps most realism. It is an almost classic example of the lyric presentation of passion, done with so ecstatic a purity as to lead one to the enthusiastic judgment that, excepting Lawrence, Miss Wilson is the only *poetic* English novelist writing major prose today. The gifts evinced in her recent "Private History of Emily Brontë"—intuitive power and an easy instinct for alienating herself from the more unimportant contemporary literary fashions—are more vividly exercised in "The Death of Society," her finest book to date.

Jerome: or, The Latitude of Love. By Maurice Bedel. Translated from the French by Lawrence S. Morris. The Viking Press. $2.

This year's Goncourt Prize novel is a delightful satire on the traditional provincialism of the French *boulevardier*, so disguised that in Paris it is being enthusiastically received as a delightful satire on the athleticism and serious social-mindedness of Norwegians. The book, admirably translated, is recommended to all the Van Vechtens of our own land who would learn to write witty light fiction with just the right savor of delicate indecency. Run down the French as one will, it must be admitted that only a great people can have the catholicity necessary to award to M. Bedel's nimble farce a literary prize which a few years ago was won by Marcel Proust.

The Redemption of Tycho Brahe. By Max Brod. Translated from the German by Felix Warren Crosse. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

A historical novel, founded on the curious relationship between Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler, and introducing to the American public a noteworthy German writer, comparable in some respects to Lion Feuchtwanger, though the latter's mind is measurably less subtle. In the persons of his two great astronomers Herr Brod depicts two diametrically opposed scientific tempers. Brahe, the emotional berserk, capable of almost infinite psychic expansion, is contrasted with the single-minded Kepler pursuing his intent way among the stars, incapable of even a glance at that riotous earth whose fortunes the mystical Brahe would link with God, the cosmos, and the planetary movements. Beside the powerful central presentation of the two personalities, the rather creaky intrigue of the tale appears dull and almost irrelevant. Like all of Herr Brod's work, the book is occasionally impeded by rhetorical over-indulgence and a heavy circumlocutory prose with which the translator fights a spirited but losing battle. Nevertheless, so much original power is manifest here that one looks forward to the planned translation of *Reübeni*, generally considered Herr Brod's most solid piece of fiction.

The Tree of Knowledge. By Pio Baroja. Translated from the Spanish by Aubrey F. G. Bell. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

Perhaps "The Tree of Knowledge" will at last bring to Baroja the recognition he has been consistently denied in this country. In most respects it is a masterly performance, this sharp, acid portrayal of the futile career of Andrés Hurtados, symbol of that intellectualist generation which grew to disillusioned manhood at about the time of the Spanish-American War. This is not the first time this book has been written by Baroja; indeed its secondary theme—the fatty degeneration of contemporary Spain—is explicitly that of his great trilogy, "The Struggle for Life." The repetitiousness, however, does not seem to matter; for his inventive genius, akin to Balzac's, provides him with eternally new situations; and his scornful, honest prose excites admiration despite the familiarity of his subject matter. There is one tiny fly in the ointment: Baroja is ordinarily so uncompromising a thinker that one hesitates to forgive him for a deal of fanciful nonsense anent the evil effects of the "Semitic soul" on the Iberian character. A few unfortunate paragraphs remind one comically of Houston Chamberlain, except that the hidalgo is substituted for the close-cropped, bespectacled blond beast.

C. P. F.

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International Relations Section

The Alsatian Problem

By EMIL LENGYEL

Strasbourg, July 23

AFTER ten years of self-deception the French have discovered that the Alsatians are not French. The honeymoon is over and the French and Alsatians are looking at each other with sober eyes.

It was not the recent trial of the autonomists in Colmar that brought about this change. The thousands who booed the verdict were good Alsatians and not German agents.

For nearly ten years official Alsace reechoed ferocious execrations against the "Boche" and the newspapers hurled defiance at the Reich. One could have no doubt that the majority of the Alsatians were happy in their new allegiance. Then suddenly discordant voices were heard. Newspapers were founded to express the opinions of dissenting Alsatians. The anti-Boche campaign became ever more feeble and Alsace turned against the "Parisians." Not that the recovered provinces have grown tired of the new union. They do not want to secede from France. They merely want to be allowed to be Alsatians.

When one passes the French-Alsatian frontier at Avricourt it is not only the landscape that changes into the undulations of the Vosges. In Bretagne, Normandy, Gascogne, Limoges, and in many other parts of France people look, dress, and speak differently. A Frenchman from Nîmes hardly understands his compatriot from St. Malo. Yet, in spite of all these variations, the different regions of France and their populations are one and the same. After Avricourt, however, the uniformity ceases and one meets a different race with a different civilization. The people look like Southern Germans, they speak a language which is Allemannic, and their homes are typically Teutonic.

For fifteen centuries the Alsatians have clung to their "patois." For the greater part of the same period their history has been different from that of all the other nations of Europe. The Bourbons, for almost two hundred years, left no means untried to assimilate the Alsatians and to make them French. Their efforts remained barren, as may be judged from an utterance of a minister of Louis XV to the effect that "Alsace is essentially a foreign country."

The Jacobins went about the Gallicanization of the province with their accustomed zeal. The Convention adopted a resolution saying that the Alsatians who did not speak French were to be interned in France. This resolution was never executed because it turned out that nearly 90 per cent of the population was ignorant of the language of the "mère patrie."

During the half century of German rule after Sedan, the Alsatians were allowed to benefit from the general prosperity of the Reich. The federal constitution of the Reich permitted them to retain a certain independence. Yet, although they were well off economically, although they had their provincial parliament and could speak their own German language without hindrance the Alsatians remained French. The spontaneous and undoctored outburst of enthusiasm which greeted the French army at the end of the war furnished the most eloquent evidence of the sympathies of the Alsatians.

What is, then, the cause of the mutual disappointment? The most obvious cause is that the French do not yet see that what is good for, say, the Department of Seine may not be good for the Department of the Bas Rhin. During the fifty years of German rule the Alsatians had grown accustomed to a decentralized administration, whereas the French have a highly centralized government.

The other cause of the mutual disappointment is best explained by a paradoxical statement: "The Alsatian laborer is a Communist who attends the mass every Sunday." For the last quarter of a century France has been living under the laws separating the church from the state. These so-called lay laws prohibit religious instruction in schools, forbid the church to possess real estate and to maintain congregations. The situation in Alsace is entirely different. Nearly 80 per cent of the Alsatians are Catholics and for the most part they are extremely religious. The schools are maintained by the different denominations.

When about four years ago the Herriot government made an attempt to introduce the lay laws into Alsace a storm of indignation was the answer and the government had to revoke its orders. The Alsatians are so apprehensive on this score that M. Poincaré had to reassure them again the other day that no one would tamper with their religious organization, including the lay school and the Concordat, as long as they wished to continue under the present regime.

The problem of the language is another cause for disaffection. Under the present arrangement, French is the language of instruction and German is being taught as a foreign language during seven hours a week from the second class of the elementary school. The situation after ten years is that many children hardly understand their parents who speak their native patois. It is even more often the case that the children do not speak correctly either of the two languages. In justification of their methods the French say that the Germans had with ruthless arbitrariness extirpated the French language in the provinces. But the French forget that the ruthless methods of the Germans affected only the language of a small fraction of the population, whereas the outlawing of the native dialect is directed against the language of the majority.

"The French administration in Alsace," says Edouard Schuré, an Alsatian writer of great ability and of unquestioned French sympathies, "has been guilty of lack of tact, delicacy, and comprehension. It has relied too much on the uppermost stratum of Alsatian society." There are two classes in Alsace: the *haute-bourgeoisie* and the farmers and laborers. The *haute-bourgeoisie* has retained an antiquated notion of patriotism. They still like to dwell on the atrocities of the Boche and on their martyrdom under German rule. The gentlemen of Paris who are sitting in the prefectures of the three departments, Haut Rhin, Bas Rhin and Moselle, are the friends of these Alsatians who speak French and think French. In their circle it is a criminal offense to have a German friend or even to be in correspondence with Germans, except on strictly business matters. This mentality, which is almost extinct in the rest of France, is extremely virulent in Alsace. Alsace is governed in the spirit of these French-Alsatians by the "gentlemen from Paris," and the society elite calls those who are not satisfied with the present regime the "Boches Alsatiens."

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It is mainly this mentality which is responsible for the less edifying outgrowths of the autonomist movement. It is this mentality which brought about the crisis in Franco-Alsatian relations at the recent trial of the autonomists at Colmar.

On Christmas eve of last year twenty-four Alsatians, leaders of the Heimatbund (Home Confederation), were arrested, charged with conspiracy to overthrow the existing regime. Their trial took place on May 24 and four of them were found guilty and sentenced to short prison terms. They were MM. Rossé, Schall, Faschauer, and Ricklin. The indignation in Alsace was general. Was the agitation in favor of a better arrangement with France to be proscribed? The trial revealed the narrow-mindedness of the upper bourgeoisie. The prosecuting attorney accused several of the defendants of correspondence with Germans. People thought that this crime had become extinct ten years ago. Was it such a frightful offense to have friends on the other side of the Rhine? The indignation reached such proportions that the four accused had to be pardoned. The Alsatian policy of the French government received a severe setback.

So far as their relations with France are concerned there are now in Alsace the autonomists, regionalists, separatists, and the *bons Français*. The first three want a readjustment of Franco-Alsatian relations, varying from complete autonomy in the framework of the French state to a greater influence of the native population in the administration of the provinces. The autonomists have a militant press. The *Zukunft* and the *Volksstimme* keep up a spirited and animated campaign against the "Parisians." They often contain vitriolic articles about the French-speaking upper bourgeoisie. The *Elsässer Kurier* represents the extremists. Its chief contributor is the Abbé Haegy, the most dynamic personality in Alsatian politics.

The result of the recent general election is instructive as a means of gauging the trend of public opinion toward autonomy. In Alsace there is a curious combination of Communists and Catholics working for the same end. The Communists want an autonomous Alsace because, as one of their critics pointed out, they always want something else than the existing order. The Catholics want a different status for Alsace because they are afraid of the lay laws and have not much confidence in the "infidel" Paris. The Socialists, however, are opposed to the extension of autonomy. This is curious because one would expect the Socialists to favor the extension of the rights of minorities. But they are upholding the present centralized regime because they hope that sooner or later the lay laws and the separation of the church from the state will be introduced into Alsace. Fourteen electoral districts were carried at the last election by the parties favoring a separate status for Alsace and only two were captured by their opponents, the Socialists. The strongest separatist party is the "Upérna," the Union Populaire Républicaine, a designation adopted by the Catholics.

As a first step, the separatists want the appointment of a governor general for the three departments who understands their problem and speaks their language. It would be incumbent on this official to elaborate a plan by which Alsace could free itself of the centralizing efforts of Paris.

It is ridiculous to assert that the Alsatians want to join the Reich. They will be perfectly happy in their new surroundings if their particular position is taken into consideration. Lying between two great countries with essentially different civilizations they are anxious to preserve not only their devoted attachment to France but also their German culture. As another great Alsatian author, René Schickelé, said the other day:

> Alsace might be developed into a great entrepôt of the spiritual values of France and Germany. Strasbourg might soon become a literary Geneva where a civilization, inherently international, might serve as the prototype of European-mindedness.

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